

The true ACCOUNT of the
Behaviour, Confession, and Dying Words

OF

JAMES HALL,

Who was executed at the End of *Catharine-street* in the *Strand*,
London, on *Monday* the 14th of *September* 1741. for the Barba-
rous Murder of his Master, *John Penny*, Esq;

[Delivered by the ORDINARY of *Newgate*.]

AT the King's Commission of Oyer and Terminer, and Goal-Delivery
of *Newgate*, held (before the Rt. Hon. *Daniel Lambert*, Esq; Lord-
Mayor of the City of *London*; the Rt. Hon. Lord Chief Justice
Willes, the Hon. Sir *John Strange*, Bart. Recorder of the City of
London; the Worshipful Mr. Serjeant *Urton*, Deputy-Recorder; and others
his Majesty's Justices for the said City, and Justices of Goal-Delivery of *New-
gate*, and County of *Middlesex*) at Justice-Hall in the *Old Bailey*, on *Friday*,
Saturday, and *Monday*, the 28th, 29th, and 30th of *August*, and *Tuesday*, the
1st of *September*, 1741. and, in the Fifth Year of his Majesty's said
Majesty, *James Hall*, *John Steven*, alias *James*, *James*,
Hudon, and *Patrick Beurn*; and three Women, viz. *Mary White*, alias *Shays*,
or *Shields*, alias *Ryan*, *Mary Harris*, alias *Murphy*, and *Elizabeth Hardy*,
were by the Jury found guilty of capital Crimes and received Sentence of Death.

James Hall being guilty of so notorious a Crime, as the Murder of his own
Master, was ordered for Execution by himself, two Days before the rest of the
Malefactors, and, for an Example (the Place near the *Inn* being too narrow)
he was ordered to be executed at the End of *Catharine-street*, in the *Strand*,
near the *New Church*.

While under Sentence, besides the Prayers and Instructions with the rest of
the Malefactors, *James Hall* was particularly exhorted to reflect on the foul,
the monstrous Crime he had been guilty of, the Murder of his own Master!
A Gentleman whose Bread he daily received, whose Bounty and Indulgence
he had often experienced, and whose good Offices he was ever sure of; and,
after all, the Requital he made, was to take away that Life, which 'twas im-
possible for him again to restore: In Robbery there may be some Reparation,
but in Murder there can be none; the Loss of Life stagnates all; 'tis the great-
est Crime Man can commit; Barbarity to the last Degree, and calls aloud for
Vengeance, for *Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*.
'Twas represented to him, how little Expectation such a Man had for Mercy,
who would give none; but, as nothing was impossible with God, he was de-
sired to cry out with holy *David*, *Deliver me from Blood Guiltiness, Oh God!*
thou God of my Salvation, and my Tongue shall sing aloud of thy Righteousness,
Psalms 51. 14.

While

While these, and other Instructions, were giving, *Hall* gave constant Attendance in Chapel, and was very attentive to Prayers, declared himself penitent for all the Sins of his Life, but especially for this most vile Sin of Murder.

James Hall, of *St. Clement's Dunes*, was indicted, for that he, being a Servant to one *John Penny*, Gentleman, not having the Fear of God before his Eyes, &c. on the 18th Day of *June*, on the said *John Penny*, then and there being, his Master, in the Peace, &c. traiterously, feloniously, wilfully, and of his Malice afore-thought, did make an Assault, and with a certain Iron Bar, Value 2d. which he the said *Hall*, in his Right Hand had and held, on the hinder-part of the Head of him the said *John Penny*, traiterously, feloniously, wilfully, and of his Malice afore-thought did strike, giving to him one mortal Blow, which broke his Skull; of which said mortal Blow, he then and there instantly dy'd.

He was a second Time indicted, for stealing a Silver Case for Instruments, covered with Shag-green, a Lancet with a Tortoiseshell Handle, a Pair of Steel Scissars, a Blade of a Knife, a Silver Ear-picker, a Pair of Tweezers, a Pair of Steel Spurs, a Silver Pencil, two Razors, seven Sticks of Sealing-wax, a Pair of Gloves, a Green Silk Purse, twelve Guineas, and twenty Half Guineas, the Goods and Money of *John Penny*, Gentleman, in the Dwelling-house, *June* the 18th.

He was indicted a third time, to all which Indictments he pleaded guilty, and received Sentence of Death accordingly.

Tuesday, September 8, Report was made to their Excellencies the Lords Justices of the Kingdom, of the Seven Malefactors lying under Sentence of Death in the Cells of *Newgate*, who were graciously pleased to relieve one of the Women, and to order the other for Execution; and in an Example for the said before) *James Hall* was ordered to be executed by himself at the End of *Catherine-street* in the *Strand*, on *Monday* the 14th Instant.

James Hall, was 37 Years of Age, and came of very honest reputable Parents at *Well* in *Hampshire*, who took Care of his Education at School, to have him taught Reading, Writing, and Accompts, sufficient to fit him for any Business, which he might (being often urged thereto) make Choice of: But *James* being of a roving Temper, not liking Confinement, came to *London*, and rather chose to live as a Servant, (which he did with several Gentlemen, and behaved well and honestly) than be ruled by his Parents, who intended to have set him up in a Farm. But fickle still, he had not been very long in Town, but his Mind changed, and he would turn *Miller*, or *Meal-man*, and trade in the Barges, which bring Meal down the River to *Queenhithe*; accordingly he went down in the Country, and took a Mill, but there he did not continue long, being very unsettled in his Resolutions: He returned again to Town, and lived in Services as before, and, when out of Place, would frequently go down, and be with his Father till a new one offered.

He married a Wife, who, he said, was not a Woman of the best Character; however, he lived with her some Years, and had several Children by her, now dead; at length they had so many Disputes and Quarrels together, being for ever jangling, that neither of them enjoyed a Moment's Peace, so that they mutually agreed to part, and accordingly made a formal Separation, and declared themselves free from each other, before several Witnesses; and after a few

few Years, he married another Wife, who visited him sometimes while under Sentence, and brought with her their little Daughter of 2 years and an half old.

Hall had been a Servant to *John Penny, Esq;* Principal of *Clement's-Inn*, upwards of Seven Years, when he committed this horrid Fact. His Master being a single Gentleman, lived in his Chambers in *Clement's-Inn*, and had nobody with him but *Hall*, to whom he had been ever a kind Master.

He pretended not to be so vicious as many such unfortunate Creatures are, though he certainly had great Failings, owing some small Debts, not exceeding (as he said) five or six Pounds, and having some other little Incumbrances, he knew not easily how to get from, the Devil put it into his Head to murder his kind Master, and for this hellish Purpose, he provided a big Stick or Club, which he hid for several Days under his Master's Bed. Before he could find an Opportunity, he had taken this damnable Resolution a long time before he put it in Execution, and followed him several Times to do it, though his Heart failed him; but at last the Devil's Power prevailed, and he perpetrated this Dreadful Scene of Villany and Barbarity, on his ancient master, who was between 67 and 68 Years of Age, in the following cruel manner.

The old Gentleman had been out the 18th day of *June* last, on some Business, and came home about Nine or Ten o'Clock at Night, and as his constant Custom was, sat in an outer Room till Bed Time, about Eleven or Twelve, *Mr. Penny* being undressed all but his Night-Gown, rose to go from the outer Room to his Bedchamber, and, as he walked along, this Monster of Wickedness came behind him, and with the aforementioned big Stick or Club, himself said, (though the Indictment called it a Bar of Iron) he cruelly struck the old Gentleman in the hinder Part of his Head, which beat him down, broke his Skull, and he never spoke more; yet his Barbarity stop'd not there, for he redoubled the Blow; and though he was fully dispatch'd, yet did this vile Man cut his Throat from Ear to Ear, and let all the Blood in his Body run out into what Vessels he had in the House: And so artful was he to prevent Discovery, that he mixt Water with the Blood, that it might not coagulate, and threw it down thro' a Grate into a sink before the Door; then strip'd both the dead Body and himself stark naked, to prevent any Spots of Blood being seen on his Cloaths, and carried his Master's Corpse upon his naked Back down Stairs, and threw it into the Bog-house. Some of the Blood was spilt on the Floor, which *Hall* endeavoured to wipe off, but in vain; neither could the Woman, who washed the Chambers ever remove it.

After this dreadful Scene was over, he kept Possession of his murdered Master's Chambers, and went to the Coffee House as usual for his Master's Breakfast: The Deceased being missing, his Friends and Relations began to be very uneasy about him; they enquired every where both in and out of Town, but to no Purpose. At last 'twas thought proper to search the Bog-house where the Body was found, after having lain there ten or eleven Days. *Hall* was taken on Suspicion, but there not being Proof enough against him in *July* Sessions, his Trial was deferr'd till this last Sessions, when he was upon his own Confession convicted.

James Hall and *John Stevens*, alias *Henry Cooke*, (try'd and convicted the same Sessions) being on the Master's Side of *Newgate*, and knowing how desperate

desperate their Cases were, meditated an Escape, and by the Assistance of a Country Butcher at *Hadley*, who brought them Pistols and a Hanger, they were in Hopes to effect it: But being discovered by a Fellow Prisoner, Mr. *Akerman*, with *Jonathan the Turnkey*, about twelve at Night, rushed in upon them, took two Pistols from *Cooke*, and confined them more close in their Cell; and next Day the Butcher, coming again with more Tools was taken, and put into the condemn'd Hold.

Hall, after this Attempt, finding no Possibility of escaping, confessed the whole of this shocking Scene on Sunday, *August 23*, to a Friend, and on the Tuesday following related the same to the Relations of the Deceased, and confessed that the Murder and Robbery was entirely his own Contrivance, and that his Wife was wholly innocent, though she had been up taken on suspicion, a Woman having sworn that she saw her go out of the *Inn* the next Morning, with bloody Linen in her Apron, which proved to be a little inconsistent, as it afterwards appeared, by *Hall* confessing that he himself threw them into the Bog-house in a particular place, where they were found; however she was before that Confession admitted to Bail on five Hundred Pounds Security.

Hall was an obstreperous, ill natur'd, sullen Man; inclined to Women, Drinking, and Gaming, for which his good Master often reproved him, and gave him the best of Advice. While under Sentence, he behaved quietly, and professed Penitence; but seemed a little too hard hearted and indifferent.

Though he confessed the Murder, yet he would not own the stealing any more than a Purse with 36 Guineas, notwithstanding a great deal more in Cash, as well as Bank Notes and a Diamond Ring, the Whole amounting to a considerable Sum, was missing.

He was a Man of good Sense, and could talk very well, though he made such a bad Use of it. He went to Church sometimes, and once received the Sacrament from a Friend of his worthy Master's. Being asked, why he pleaded guilty, and did not stand his Trial? He said, it was to discharge his Conscience, and save his innocent Wife, who might, perhaps, upon a positive Oath, have been convicted, though she knew nothing of the Matter, nor was in any Shape concerned.

He seemed mightily affected that his Body should be hung in Chains, and exposed to open View for many Years after Death. But being reminded of the Heinousness of his Crime, and that his great Duty was to mind the grand Affair, the Salvation of his Soul, which lives when the Body is no more, he then seemed more composed.

On *Wednesday* the 9th Instant, when the Dead Warrant was brought to *Nerogate*, *Hall* was intreated, in a tender manner, to make a good Use of his precious Moments, and to beseech GOD for Pardon for his Sins: At which Time he seemed much mollified, and almost wept; which was the first Instance of his being observed to be tender hearted, or much affected.

Being asked concerning a Report pretty current about the Town, of his going several Nights into his Master's Room, very late, when he was in Bed, with a lighted Candle in his Hand, and looking in his Face, and his Master asking him what he wanted, and his retiring; also about his Master's observing to some Friends, that for some Time past, his Man seemed to look furly,

furly, and their advising him to make a strong new Bolt for the Chamber Door on the inside? he absolutely denied them, and said they were idle Reports; and that he never knew his master entertain any the least Suspicion of him.

He declared his Faith in Christ, that he repented of his wicked Life, and was in Peace with all men.

At the Place of EXECUTION.

ON the Sunday Forenoon before he died, when I came down from Chappel, *James Hall's* first Wife, was in the *Yard*, sitting on a Bench, and seeing her Husband pass by to the Cells, she cried out in a strange manner, seemed to be in Fits, and took off her Hood and threw it in the Dust as if she had been mad; I advis'd her, to submit to God's Will and resign herself; the Head-keeper ordering *Hall* down, the Woman went and met him in the Passage of the Cells, she freely forgave him, as he did her, and he gave her half a Crown.

On Monday Morning, there being a special Order to do Duty betimes in the morning, *James Hall* was brought to Chappel, betwixt 6 and 7 o'Clock, he heard and complied with Prayers devoutly, and was attentive to a short Exhortation proper for his Exit. About 8 in the morning he was taken out and put into an Hurdle, and carried through *Newgate*, down the *Old Bailey*, *Ludgate-hill*, *Fleetstreet*, through *Temple Bar*, and along the *Strand* 'till they came to the Place of Execution, the middle of the Street opposite to the End of *Catherine-street*, to which Place he came about 9 o'Clock in the morning, a little after which I went into the Cart, and he devoutly comply'd with the Prayers, and then was willing to hear part of the 16th Psalm, relating to the Resurrection, Sung, but had no more to add to his Confessions, having done that fully already to Mr. APPLEBEE. After I had discharged my Duty, the Revd. Mr. VILLETTE, Curate of *St. Luke, Middlesex*, who had at Times attended him after Sentence, went up into the Cart, by his own Desire, and pray'd by him for some time. The said Gentleman was desired to ask him whether he had not concealed any of the Effects of his late master, more than what he had in *Newgate* confessed, to which he answer'd, as he was a dying man he had confessed the Truth; and being press'd by many suitable Arguments to glorify God by a free and open Confession, he declared again, he cou'd add nothing more to his former Confession, which was the very Truth. He seem'd and appear'd intent upon the Prayers, and as the Revd. Mr. VILLETTE made him repeat some suitable penitential Psalms, he wept, and earnestly joined in those Prayers which recommended him to the Mercy of Almighty God. To all outward Appearance, and as far we can judge, he died a true Penitent. Just as he was going off, he cry'd to God to receive his Soul. His Body hung three Quarters of an Hour; after which he was taken down, and carry'd to *Sheppard's Bush*, in order to be hung in Chains.

This is all the Account given by me,

JAMES GUTHRIE, Ordinary of *Newgate*.

The

The Confession deliver'd by JAMES HALL to Mr.
APPLEBEE.

I had a Design to murder my Master for about a Month or more, before I did it; and having kept pretty much Company of late, and spent what I had, and being in Debt, I was resolv'd to stay no longer; accordingly *June 17*, having drank myself to a proper Pitch, I determin'd to put my Design in Execution.

That Night my Master came Home between 11 and 12, and I pulled off his Shoes and Stockings, and he pulled off his Breeches in the Dining-Room, and was walking to his Bed-Side, with his under Stockings on, when I came behind him in his Bed-Chamber, (it being soon after 12) and with a large Oaken Stick, which I had kept under his Bed some Time for that Purpose, and which I had bought with Design to murder him with, and knocked him down at one Blow; and I am very sure he never knew who struck him, or was sensible of any Pain; after this I gave him two or three Blows on the Head, and believe he was quite dead, for he neither sigh'd or groan'd: This Stick I had in my Hand 8 or 10 Times before with a Design to murder him, but my Heart always fail'd me till now.

It's impossible to describe the Horror and Confusion I was in at what I had done, and I wou'd have given a thousand Worlds if I had had them, that I had not done so cruel an Act, and I hated myself for the barbarity of the Action, and yet the Power of the Devil was so great, that he prompted me to cut his Throat, which I had no Occasion to do, for he certainly was dead, or dying, when I began.

In order to do this, I went into the Dining-Room, and stript myself stark naked, that no Blood might appear on any of my Cloaths or Linen, and then took a little black handled Knife (with which my Master used to cut Fruit and Cheese) and cut his Throat, from whence issued such a vast Quantity of Blood, that it fill'd almost five Chamber Pots, when mingled with a little clean Water, which I did to make it pass thro' the Sink at the Door, the more easily; three of which Pots thus mixed, I flung down the Sink, and two into the Coal-Hole.

Then I tyed his black Waistcoat which he wore that Day, about his Neck, which being lined with Duffel, I thought would the more easily suck in the Blood from his Throat; as soon as this was done, naked as I was, I flung him a-cross my Shoulder, and run with him to the Bog-house, and threw him in Head foremost, about one (or soon after) in the Morning, at the large Hole, where they empty Close Stools.

The Horror and Fear I was in was so great, that I rather flew than ran, never felt the Ground under me. As I return'd from the Bog house, my Fears and Apprehensions were such, that the Inn appear'd as if all in a Flame of Fire; when I came back to the Chambers, I took my Master's Coat, bloody Shirt, the Stick I knock'd him down with, and some Rags I had made Use of in wiping up the Blood, and run a second Time naked down to the Boghouse with them, and threw them into the second Seat of the Necessary-house, on the left Hand,

Hand, opposite to where I had thrown the Body down, and where I believe the Relations found them ; after this, I open'd the Writing Desk, Scrutore, &c. and took about 36 Guineas from out of my Master's Pocket and the Writing-desk, which I put into my Master's green Purse, which I found in his Breeches Pocket ; I also took several useless Things, as Wax, Franks, &c. which with the Purse I carried to Mr. *Knight's*, the Taylor, on the 18th, who upon my Commitment to *Newgate*, deliver'd them to Col. *De Veil* : My Master's two mourning Rings I had taken from his Fingers before I carried his Body out of the Chambers, and which Mr. *Wotton* has found where I directed him. I was under such Confusion, whilst searching the Chambers, that I scarce look'd over half the Drawers or Places, or scarce knew what I took : After this, I was all the remaining Part of the Night washing and rubbing the Rooms with Cloths, but found the Blood very difficult to get out, which made me wet them again, and light the Fire in the Morning to dry them ; and then I went to fetch Mrs. *Laws* the Laundress, to wash them over again, telling her my Master had bled over Night at the Nose, and smear'd them.

All that Day I went from Place to Place, but could find no rest or be easy ; the horrid Murder of my Master still running in my Mind ; but though I had done so foul a Crime, all my Thoughts were taken up how to conceal it, and the Body being in so secret a Place, I thought would not be found. Whereupon I went on Friday Morning, June 19, to Mr. *Wotton*, my Master's Nephew, to enquire after my master, and to tell him he lay out all Night, and that he went out the Day before by Water, and said he would return at Night, but never did, and that I was afraid, my master had come to some Harm, though I never told him my Master had bled at the Nose over night, and blooded the Rooms, as I did the Laundress ; for he asked me so many Questions, and was so particular in enquiring after his Uncle, that it gave me great Uneasiness, and terrify'd me ; afterwards, I went generally twice every Day to Mr. *Wotton*, to know where to go to enquire after my master, &c. though every time I went I was under great Anxiety, and Disquietude ; and in this dismal State, I continu'd being all the While terribly afraid of lying or even being alone in the Chambers.

On the Sunday after the murder, I was so afraid, that I had my Wife to lye with me in my master's Bed, and all Night long I could not sleep for dread and Horror ; and a few Nights after, I had her again to lye at Chambers with me ; and frequently ask'd Mr. *Wotton* to send somebody to lye at Chambers, for I did not care to be alone.

On Monday, June 29, Mr. *Wotton* took me up, and when before the Justice, I stiffly denied it, as I did likewise the next Day, even after the Body was found, though I was all over in a sweat the Instant I heard the Body was taken up.

After I was in *Newgate*, hearing Mr. *Wotton* had found Blood on the Wainscot, on the Pictures, on the Boxes under the Bed, and other Parts of the Room, greatly alarm'd me, for I, in my Confusion, had over-look'd it, and never saw it, though I continu'd so long in the Chambers, for I had not Resolution to look about the Bed-Chamber, and likewise hearing Mr. *Wotton* had besides the Parcel found at the Taylor's, such strong Evidence against me, I grew greatly afraid, and thought I should be convicted ; on this I readily came into a Proposal made to me of an Escape, which miscarrying, and I being detected, threw me into a Flood of Tears, for then I knew all Hopes were lost. Soon

Soon after I was put into the Cells; and there, being so much alone, I began more seriously to reflect on my unhappy Case; and that, by my Denial of the Fact, I might bring an innocent Wife into the wretched Place where I was, (for she was then at large on Five Hundred Pounds Bail) which might kill her and my Child, though I did not doubt of her Acquittal.

On these Considerations, as well as to ease my own Conscience, I determined to make an ample Confession, which I had frequently a Desire to do; but, when just ready to confess, I flew back, and remained inflexible; but now resolved upon it, I sent for Mr. *Hawkins*, formerly my Fellow-Servant, to whom I related the Whole of this barbarous Murder, and desired him to acquaint Dr. *Penny*, the Dean of *Litchfield*, and Mr. *Wotton*, with it, which he did; and they, and he, came to me in the *Press-Yard*, to whom I confirmed what I had confessed to Mr. *Hawkins*; and accordingly, as I told them I would, I pleaded guilty to all the Indictments the first Day of the Sessions.

This Confession gave great Ease to my tortured Soul, and made my mind much quieter: Though I own myself very sorry for one Action done since my Commitment to *Newgate*, and which I was drawn into unawares, and that was the attempting to hire Witnesses to swear, they saw Mr. *Penny* alive *June 18*, at Noon.

For which Purpose I was recommended by a Prisoner in *Newgate*, to an Attorney, who came to me soon after my Commitment, and I gave him at one Time 10 s. 6 d. and the next Day two Guineas more, to give two Witnesses, to swear my Master was seen alive the 18th, and to whom I was to give more money when the Business was done; and by the Attorney's Directions, I reduc'd into Writing a Description of my Master, and the Places he resorted to, for the Witnesses to swear, but after I had paid my money to him, I heard no more of him; and I hear since he went and made an Information of what I had said to him and done, to Col. *Deveil*, and delivered to him the description of my Master under my own Hand.

N. B. The above Account of the barbarous murder of my late worthy Master Mr. PENNY, which I now deliver to Mr. APPLEBEE, is just after the very manner that I committed that cruel and most barbarous of Facts. *The Lord have Mercy on my Soul.*

*From my Cell, at Newgate, Sept. 12th, 1741.
Saturday, 7 o'Clock.*

JAMES HALL.

LONDON Printed, and DUBLIN Re-printed for JAMES KELBURN at the Three Golden Balls in George's-lane, opposite the Castle-Market, 1741.